

NEW CITY DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR WEEK OF 8/17/2020-8/21/2020

The following content is based on the message on 8/16/20 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. It is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather a resource to help you analyze and apply the main ideas. To use this devotional effectively, please listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

MONDAY // WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Read Matthew 7:15-20. Jesus is telling us to beware of dangerous church leaders. These are people who look innocent. They look like they are building God's kingdom and they look like they are full of love; but actually, they are full of themselves. Instead of looking for ways to care for people, they look for ways to use people for their own gain. Oftentimes these ravenous wolves — who are disguised — need ways to feed their own ego, and people who get in the way feel as if they get devoured. If Jesus was speaking our passage in today's language, He very well might be telling us to watch out for the narcissistic pastor or church leader.

- *Jesus tells us to beware of these false church leaders. Why do you think we have a hard time recognizing when someone someone is a wolf in sheep's clothing?*
- *How do you think there is a little bit of narcissism in all of us?*

TUESDAY // NARCISSISTIC PASTORS ARE EVIL

Read Jeremiah 23:1-2. A narcissistic pastor can look the part. They can seem to be building God's kingdom; but internally they only care about themselves and they see themselves as the one building God's kingdom. That should feel grossly evil to you. God is not okay with this behavior and ultimately He will hold church leaders accountable. Ephesians 5:13 says, "But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them." God will expose works of evil and He will hold church leaders accountable to their actions.

The light will always illuminate the darkness.

- *What is your experience with God's light illuminating sinful darkness?*
- *Set a timer for at least two minutes. Sit in silence and reflect on why it is important to see how God handles people who abuse church leadership.*

WEDNESDAY // JESUS IS BUILDING A BODY

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says this: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus isn't building His Church through one person. Even the great Peter himself only played a role in the church. God isn't just using one person to build His church. He is using all of us in the body. **Read Ephesians 4:1-16.** Even though there are wolves in sheep's clothing out there, Jesus is building a body that involves each of us being attached to Him.

Jesus uses each of us to build the body up in love.

- *How are you encouraged by the fact that Jesus is building His Church?*
- *How does the Church as a body of people eliminate all ability for a narcissist to look at his/her accomplishments?*

THURSDAY // JESUS INVITES US TO REST

Read John 15:1-9. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He's the source, and we need to draw from His love as the source. How do we do that? During the last night of Jesus' life, He invites each of us in to abide in Him. What that means is that Jesus invites you to sit in His love. You can sit knowing that Jesus deeply and inwardly cares for your soul. You can stop trying so hard. You don't have to prove yourself. Jesus wants you, and He wants you to know that He loves you unconditionally.

Jesus knows you and He invites you in.

- *What keeps you from believing that you are loved by Jesus?*
- *Set a timer for two minutes or longer. Tell yourself that Jesus loves you in spite of the reasons that you feel unlovable. Spend some moments sitting in silence as you soak in His love.*

FRIDAY // FRUIT FROM ABIDING IN JESUS

Each and every one of us are invited to sit in Jesus' love. When we do that, Jesus says that we will bear much fruit. But what kind of fruit is he talking about? **Read Galatians 5:16-26.** Back in our original passage this week, Jesus said that we can identify a wolf in sheep's clothing by the fruit of their life. Unfortunately, we often settle for cheap fruit, rather than the fruit of God. The true fruit of abiding in Jesus is the fruit of the Spirit. It is easy to get distracted by things that aren't from God. They may be good things, but they don't come out of a heart that is abiding in Jesus.

In order to bear healthy fruit, we must sit in the love of Jesus ourselves.

- *How are we tempted to settle for other forms of fruit when Jesus wants us to bear fruit that comes from Him?*
- *Set a timer for two minutes or more. Reflect on the fruit that you would like to see in your own life from abiding in the love of Jesus.*